2:Musil S-4,5 (no dat 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

of his tribe. If then his tribesmen steal anything from his native *ḫaḍr* they must return it, and vice versa. 609 572

When a member of a hostile tribe is hired by a Rwejli to herd his camels and the herd entrusted to his care is attacked by his tribesmen, he is allowed by the raiders to keep for the Rwejli three she-camels, one for riding and two for milking, *ḳa'ada w-mendjeḥeḥ* or *rakûba w-ḥalûba*. 672

WANDERING PETTY MERCHANTS OR KUBEJSÂT

In almost every camp there lives a wandering merchant called a Kubejsi (pl. Kubejsât), although he does not always hail from the settlement of al-Kubejsa, near Hît on the right bank of the middle Euphrates. He comes with one or two camels laden with his goods, quarters himself as a guest with a Bedouin, pitches beside the black tent of his host his round white tent, *ḫejme*, and begins to sell cheap kerchiefs, men's shirts, material for women's shirts, shoes, and numerous other articles of clothing, *bzâ'*, and also tobacco, coffee, *hejl* (cardamom), and some drugs. He pays the owner of the tent where he boards with cloth enough to make one suit. The chief gets nothing at all. 443

Few Bedouins buy for cash, but nearly all buy on credit, paying 25 per cent interest in five months. The creditor, *dajjân*, presses his debtor, *medjûn*, all the time to pay what he owes him. He seizes his camels and often even his mare so as not to lose anything; for no Bedouin would ever pay if not compelled to do so; yet there are times when he, too, finds constant dunning unbearable. It is said: 426 452

Mâ hamm illa hamm ad-dên
w-lâ waǧa' illa waǧa' al-'ên.

Nothing causes more torment than a debt,
And nothing greater pain than the eye.

The interest, *fâjeẓ*, on borrowed money must be paid at once in cash. For instance, on borrowing 10 *meǧidijjât* ($9.00), 2½ *meǧidijjât* interest is paid for a year in advance and the borrower has to declare that he has borrowed 12½ *meǧidijjât*, when as a matter of fact all that is left to him is 10 *meǧidijjât*. Both the debt and interest must be paid at the

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

426 time when camel markets are held, namely in July or August,
452 when the Bedouins camping in the tilled country sell their camels, *wakt al-mowsem*. Every debtor brings his bondsman, who declares in the presence of the creditor that so much is owed and that the principal together with the interest, *marbuḥ*, will be paid at a certain stated date. Should the Kubejsi in the meantime die, his host, *ma'azzeb*, collects the amounts due to him and hands them over to his heirs. Debts contracted with the Kubejsât, the Bedouins pay regularly enough, mainly because they fear that otherwise no merchants would come to them.

443 When the Rwala camp in a settled region, some of the big merchants send messengers to the prince to inquire whether he will allow them to come to his camp with goods to sell. If the messengers receive the prince's assurance that he will take them under his protection, *buwâḡh aš-šejḫ*, the wholesaler loses no time in dispatching his employees to the camp, and before long from fifty to seventy white tents, *ḫijâm*, will be seen in the prince's camp. In these everything is sold that the Bedouin's heart desires. For each of these tents one new pack saddle, *ḥedâǧe*, and one *roṭol* (2.56 kilograms) of green coffee are delivered to the prince as his due. Their stay in the camp terminates about the middle of August, for at the end of that month the Rwala usually return to the inner desert.

439 In the settled territory many merchants take camels in
435 exchange for their wares, thus enabling the Bedouins to provide themselves with everything they need or desire. The sons of the desert are like children in this respect, wanting all they see or whatever takes their fancy and little caring whether they really need it or not. They buy all sorts of expensive things, often toys, which they soon spoil and then simply throw away as useless. As long as they have camels, or at least the money received for them, they pay cash; when this is gone, they either borrow money or buy on credit without worrying when or if ever the debt will be paid. It is a common saying in the desert: "Debt eats away the profit of him who borrows, *ad-dên kaṭṭâʿ rizḳ al-meʿbel*."

POEMS RELATING TO ḲUṢARA' AND KUBEJSÂT

539[c] There are frequent references to both the stranger *ḫaṭr* and the merchant in Bedouin poems.